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173 The foregoing is far from historic proof that the Mandans did not at the times mentioned have their real base on the Missouri river. If they had been driven out of the "plains southwest of Lake Winnipeg" southward to the Missouri river about the end of the 17th century, which plains had been their own country, it seems hardly possible that they would not have so informed Verendrye in 1738—less than half a century after such ejection; nor would they have been likely to have forgotten it as a fresh tradition when Lewis and Clarke visited them. But if they had been **hunting** or marauding on those Canadian plains, and had failed to make permanent lodgment there as a home while really living on the Missouri, such rebuffs by the Crees and Assiniboines would be less consequential and might account for silence on the part of the Mandans concerning their Canadian campaigns. We continue the account from "Indian Sign Language:"

"Information given to the late General William Clarke in his expedition up the Missouri denotes that the Mandans have suffered greater vicissitudes of fortune than most of the American tribes."

361 **Walled Villages.** About a century ago they were settled on both banks of the Missouri some fifteen hundred miles above its mouth. They were then living in mire villages, surrounded by circular walls of earth without the adjunct of a ditch. The ruins of one of the old villages, observed in 1804, covered nearly eight acres and denoted a comparatively large population. Two of these villages were on the east and seven on the west side of the Missouri. They were first discovered and made known to us in this position in 1772. (Mitchell's letter herewith.)

721 **Their Wars.** They appear to have been a hated tribe to the Dakotas, or Sioux, and Assiniboines, who from the earliest traditionary times carried on fierce war against them.

361 **Smallpox.** Finding themselves sorely pressed by this war and having experienced the wasting inroads of the smallpox the two •166 eastern villages united into one and migrated up the river to a point opposite to the Arickaree, fourteen hundred and thirty [164] miles above the mouth. The same causes soon pressed the other seven western villages, reducing them to five; they also afterward 721 migrated in a body and joined their tribesmen in the Arickaree country, and concentrated and settled themselves in two large villages. Here they dwelt for a time, but were still subject to

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the fierce attacks of their enemies; and deeming the position unfavorable they removed higher up the river and took possession of a precipitous and tenable point of land formed by an involution of the Missouri, where they formed one compact village in 1776. The eastern Mandans had settled in two villages, but finding the attacks of the Sioux hard to be resisted united also in one village. The two divisions of Mandan villages were still separated by the Missouri river, but seated directly opposite each other about three miles apart, including lowlands.

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The position is estimated to be sixteen hundred miles from the junction of the Missouri with the Mississippi. There they were visited by Lewis and Clarke on the 27th October, 1804. This was a memorable and an auspicious event in their history, as these intrepid American explorers determined to pass their first winter in this vicinity. They built Fort Mandan, a few miles distant, on a heavily wooded piece of bottom land, which yielded trees of sufficient size for erecting quarters for themselves and the men. They immediately opened an intercourse with the Mandans and established a friendship with them, which was strengthened by the incidents of a winter's residence." (pp. 239-240).

The following is an extract from Mr. Mitchell's letter above referred to: "The early portion of their history I gather from the narration of Mr. Macintosh, who, it seems, belonged to, or was in some way connected with the French Trading Company as far back as 1772. According to his narration, he set out from Montreal in the summer of 1773, crossed over the country to the Missouri river and arrived at one of the Mandan villages on Christmas day. He gives a long and somewhat romantic description of the manner in which he was received, and dwells at some length upon the greatness of the Mandan population, their superior intelligence and prowess in war. He says at that time the Mandans occupied nine large towns lying contiguous and could at short notice muster fifteen thousand mounted warriors." Clarke continues:

"I am inclined to think that the statistics of the author whom I have quoted are somewhat exaggerated, and at the time he visited the Missouri the Mandans were not so numerous as he represents. There are, however, the ruins of five villages in the neighborhood of the present village, which were evidently at one time occupied by the Mandans; and judging from the space which

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these 'deserted villages' cover they must have been powerful communities, at least as far as numbers could make them powerful.

"Whatever may have been their population, there is no doubt that the Mandans suffered more severely from the smallpox than any of the other tribes, and were, in fact, nearly exterminated by it. Mr. Girard says that when he joined them in 1849 the memory of the terrible ravages made by this disease was still fresh in their minds, and they stated that only thirty-five survived the terrible ordeal. He thinks that the disease overtook them in 1832 or 1833, when there were five villages of from sixty to two hundred and fifty lodges each, in all about one thousand lodges, averaging some thirteen persons to a lodge. I am inclined to think he is mistaken in regard to the date, and that they had the smallpox in 1837 instead of 1832-3. Schoolcraft, speaking of this, says: 'Surrounded, as the Mandans were, by active enemies, and doomed, as they appeared to be, to extinction, they might have resisted this course of depopulation a long period had it not been for the reoccurrence of smallpox among them in the summer of 1837. By this fatal calamity their numbers were reduced in a few days to less than one-sixteenth of their whole number. One of the reports of the disease reduced the survivors to thirty-one, another to one hundred and twenty-three.'

"They maintained their individuality as a tribe and increased their numbers by stringent marriage laws. They did not allow their women to marry into other bands or tribes unless the man would renounce his tribal relations, join them and agree that the children should talk the Mandan language and be reared in their customs and beliefs." (P. 241.)

Clarke discards without discussion the idea that their physical peculiarities or language indicates Welsh antecedents. He proceeds:

"The physical peculiarities of many of the Mandans, viz., their blue eyes and light hair, have led to the wildest kind of speculation in regard to their origin, some claiming that they were a lost Welsh colony and that their language supported this theory. It is hardly necessary to say that this has no foundation in fact. Some of the children also have gray hair, but this probably 'only denotes a morbid state of it, analogous to that which supervenes in albinoes.' This peculiarity is not limited to the Mandans, the

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There was considerable variability in the status of household groups. Those groups possessing important tribal bundles and participating frequently in the ceremonies occupied high status in the village and endeavored to preserve their eminence by selective marriage of their children. The importance of the lodge group was also expressed by offerings placed on poles erected before the lodge. These offerings were distinctive and proclaimed the existing status of the household bundle. One's loyalty remained with the lodge group one was born into, while subsequent marriages united groups of households.

A lodge group could leave one village and join another at will. Usually a number of related households moved at one time, but there are numerous references to groups transferring from one village to another. Informants thought that the three Mandan groups or bands were endogamous. When a group left one village, it endeavored to affiliate with its own band in one of the villages. Mandan informants had been told of at least four reasons why a household group would change villages. When a certain cermony had been allowed to die out or become inactive, a household having rights in that ceremony could enhance its social status by moving out of a village in which there were a number having rights in the ceremony, to take up residence in another where there were few having those particular ceremonial rights. Other household groups moved into another village over the recognition of chiefs. When a small group was dissatisfied with the leadership of the village, rather than have trouble, they moved into another village. Scattercorn remembered that there was often dissatisfaction among the women over the selection of a village site. She recalled that one of their villages was so sandy that the caches caved in, and some of the women wanted to move to another site. When the leaders refused, they were invited to affiliate with another village, which they did. The Missouri River frequently changed its course and sometimes cut through the gardens, destroying the garden sites belonging to some households. When no potential corn ground was available near at hand, household groups were obliged to move to a village with an abundance of suitable corn ground in preference to walking great distances to their gardens.

The protohistoric Mandan sites of the Heart River region have ruins of one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and